

Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-14

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R 241123Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7023

INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

DIA WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU

13TH AIR FORCE/CLARK AB PHIL

AMCONSUL SONGKHLA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 15352

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJECT: STUDENTS ATTACK CONSTITUTION (V)

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: A. BANGKOK 15282; B. BANGKOK 15209; C. FBIS D240322Z SEP 74;

D. FBIS D240320Z SEP 74 E. FBIS D240316Z SEP 74 F. FBIS D240327Z

SEP 74

1. THE NATIONAL VOCATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND (NVSCT) HAS COME OUT FOUR-SQUARE IN SUPPORT OF THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY'S (NLA) RIGHT AND DUTY TO VOTE ON THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION IN ITS THIRD READING FREE FROM OUTSIDE PRESSURE FROM ANY SOURCE. THE NVSCT LEADERSHIP HAS STATED IT WILL SUPPORT WHATEVER DECISION

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THE NLA MAKES PROVIDING THE DECISION IS NOT ONE TAKEN

UNDER DURESS. MORNING NEWSPAPERS ESTIMATED 7,000 OR MORE PARTICIPANTS IN THE NVSCT DEMONSTRATION IN FRONT OF THE NLA ON 23 SEPTEMBER 1974, AND MORE THAN 50 PLASTIC BOMBS WERE EXPLODED DURING THE DAY TO HELP PUNCTUATE THE NVSCT POSITION. THE DEMONSTRATION SERVES AS A STRONG WARNING TO THE NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND (NSCT) AGAINST CARRYING OUT ITS THREAT OF VIOLENCE SHOULD THE NLA PASS THE CONSTITUTION IN DEFiance OF THE NSCT AND THIRAYUT BUNMI. THE PRIMARY TARGETS FOR NVSCT CRITICISM WERE SEKSAN PRASOETKUN (WHO HAS ACTUALLY BEEN CONSPICUOUS BY HIS ABSENCE SINCE THE FIRST DAY OF THE NSCT DEMONSTRATIONS) AND THIRAYUT BUNMI.

2. IN ITS LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER SANYA THAMMASAK THE NVSCT STATED THAT,

"WE HAVE NO INTENTION OF CAUSING TROUBLE FOR THE PEOPOLE OR GOVERNMENT. OUR ACTION IS NOT A THREAT TO THE ASSEMBLY, ALL WE WANT IS A CONSTITUTION THROUGH DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES".

3. SANYA HIMSELF, THOUGH HE CLAIMS HE IS AT HIS "WITS END", SEEMS TO BE BACKING AWAY FROM HIS ORIGINALLY REPORTED POSITION OF CAPITULATION TO STUDENT DEMANDS. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PUBLIC STATEMENT HE MADE AFTER HIS MEETING WITH NSCT REPRESENTATIVES ON 21 SEPTEMBER 1974 (REF A), HE NOW SAYS, " I MERELY TOLD THE NSCT REPRESENTATIVES THAT IF THE ASSEMBLY FAILED TO PASS THE THIRD READING THEN THE GOVERNMENT WOULD SUBMIT A NEW DRAFT TO THE ASSEMBLY WITHOUT HESITATION". MINISTRY OF INTERIOR SPOKESMEN SAY THAT IF THERE IS A NEW DRAFT CONSTITUTION ELECTIONS WILL BE DELAYED SEVERAL MONTHS.

4. DURING A MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR KINTNER AND DCM ON THE EVENING OF 23 SEPTEMBER 1974, GENERAL KRIT SIWARA EXPRESSED PLEASURE WITH THE STAND TAKEN BY THE VOCATIONAL STUDENTS. HE IS NOT UNDULY UPSET WITH THE CURRENT SITUATION, AND BELIEVES AGITATION BY MODERATE NVSCT WILL NEUTRALIZE DEMONSTRATIONS BY LEFTISTS AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS. KRIS SAID THE CONSTITUTION WILL PASS THE NLA UN-CHANGED AND WILL REMAIN SO UNTIL AFTER ELECTIONS IN FEBRUARY 1975 WHEN THE NEW PARLIAMENT MIGHT WELL AMEND

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THE DOCUMENT TO RESPOND TO CURRENT STUDENT CRITICISM.

5. COMMENT: THE SITUATION, THOUGH STILL CONFUSED, HAS CALMED CONSIDERABLY OVER THAT PREVAILING IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE PRIME MINISTER'S APPARENT CAPITULATION TO NSCT DEMANDS ON SEPTEMBER21. IT IS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT THE NSCT AND FORMER NSCT LEADER THIRAYUT BUNMI, WHO TALK SO MUCH ABOUT VIOLENCE, ARE PREPARED TO CHALLENGE THE SHOCK TROOPS

OF THE NVSCT. THE VOCATIONAL STUDENTS HAVE, IN EFFECT, BECOME THE BALANCING FACTOR IN THE CURRENT CONFRONTATION AND THEIR THREAT OF VIOLENCE COULD PREVENT FURTHER VIOLENCE AND FORCE A RETURN TO RATIONALITY BY ALL THE CONTENDING FORCES.

KINTNER

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